

# Reaseheath Golf Club

## Newsletter—February 2006

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### An excellent end ...!

About 80 members and guests attended the Annual Dinner Dance at Hunters Lodge on Saturday 11 February. There was universal agreement that the evening was excellent, with good food, good music and good company. Many thanks to those that organised it, and principally to Dave Stanistreet.

Outgoing captains, Brian Drakeley and Kath Carr, thanked everyone for the support during the year. Brian announced that £750 had been raised for his charity, MacMillan Cancer Relief.

### And an excellent start!

A course-full of 40 members took part in the Captains' Drive-in on the morning following the Annual Dinner Dance. The light but steady drizzle didn't really detract from a closely fought contest when the outgoing captains' team, led by Brian Drakeley and Kath Carr, beat the incoming captains' (Brian Gough and Mary Moran) team 5½-4½. The drive on the 1st is the actual moment when the captaincy is passed over to the incoming captain. Perhaps the writing was on the wall for the incoming captains' team when Brian's drive skied about 30ft in the air, further than it travelled horizontally!

To make amends, Brian's wife, Shirley, and daughter Sharon provided excellent bacon butties after the match!

### Membership availability

As normal, there have been a number of resignations at this time of year and all types of membership are available. Membership forms are available from the Secretary.

### Captains' Away Day - Fri 2 June—Priors Hayes

### Our new Club Captain—Brian Gough

Brian was born in Warrington in 1934 and came to Crewe in 1939 when his father joined Rolls Royce. Brian trained as a dental technician till age of 26. He then joined his friend's father's firm, Harold Penk Bookmakers, and property development until age of 40. Brian then ran his own bookmaking business in Nantwich until retiring in 1997. Since then Brian has resumed his work as a dental technician on a casual basis, and many



### Our new Lady Captain—Mary Moran

Mary has been playing golf for six years. Her other interests include crown green bowling, swimming, cookery and making new friends.



Mary has been married to Barry for 33 years. They have a son and three grandchildren who Barry moved to Sandbach 17 years ago. Mary is looking forward to her year as Lady Captain and is keen to encourage more ladies to play in competitions and club matches. She wishes best wishes to all the lady members for the coming year.

## Our new Club Captain—Brian Gough (contd)

members of Reaseheath are able to chew as a result of his handiwork!

Brian has always had a keen interest in sport, playing local league football with Crewe Rovers and Crewe Villa amongst others. He played golf for a number of years at Market Drayton until pressure of business curtailed the golf. He resumed golf again at Reaseheath on retirement in 1997. His other hobbies include gardening when necessary, and as much travel abroad as possible.

Brian is looking forward to a busy year in office, which coincides with his Golden Wedding Anniversary in July. Shirley and Brian have two children, Shaun and Sharon, both married, and three grandchildren who are the apples of his eye. Sharon's husband, Phil Petrozzi, also plays at Reaseheath.

## Your Committee—new members and vacancies

Details of the committee are in the membership handbook. We would like to mention the four new members.

Congratulations to Jonathan Staton and Jeanne Soddy as the respective vice captain's. Also, welcome to John Lewis as midweek members organiser and Ian O'Malley as Junior Organiser.

The club still has vacancies for two very important posts, those of Competition Secretary and Handicap Secretary. As the computer programme produces reports for both competition results and handicaps, there is logic in combining the posts. Eddie Jackson has kindly agreed to continue until a replacement(s) is found.

If you might be interested, please contact

**Sponsorship**—does anyone want to sponsor a business (or themselves!) by sponsoring a tee marker or the fixture card for three years?? £100-£200. Contact Chris Bishop for details

## Reaseheath Golf Course - The future!

For most people, the golf course is the single most important feature of a golf club. At the AGM the head green keeper, Richard Murray, outlined his plans for the future, his principal aim being to make Reaseheath the best 9-hole course in Cheshire! Over the years, the course has developed considerably. However, a number of aspects have not improved as much as we would like and Richard would be the first one to admit that.

It was very encouraging to hear the positive comments at the AGM from several members about the excellent value for money that the green fees at Reaseheath represent. One only has to look at the membership fees and green fees at all other clubs in the areas to appreciate that. However, it is our ambition to ensure that Reaseheath matches the best in terms of the condition of the course, both for the benefits of our members and also to demonstrate the highest standards to our students.

Fairly frequently one hears the term 'millionaires' golf' applied to Reaseheath golf course. Whilst we would like to think that this is referring to the quality of the course, we are aware that it refers to the ability to often just turn up and play, albeit on a short good quality course.

However, the lack of players has its down side. Fewer members and visitors normally means less income. Money is needed both to maintain the golf course and to run the club. Members attending the AGM were able to see the way in which the College spends the money from green fees and how the Club spends the membership fees. Given the competition from other clubs and the number of members that play relatively infrequently, we do not believe that it is an option to increase membership fees significantly. Hence, it is important to provide a facility of the highest quality to attract both more members and more visitors.

Both for the benefit of members and as a management tool, we have conducted, in management terms, a SWOT analysis of the course and then developed our thoughts on how we can progress the course to achieve Richard's target of being the best 9-hole course!



## SWOT analysis of Reaseheath golf course

<p><u>Strengths</u></p> <p>Flat course - less tiring          Short - suitable for beginners, short hitters, limited time          Technically demanding - good for accuracy &amp; short game          Economical green fees          Free draining soil - course rarely closes          Good range of equipment</p>	<p><u>Weaknesses</u></p> <p>9 holes - less variation, more wear and tear than 18 holes          Short - limiting for long hitters          Limited facilities in clubhouse          Inconsistencies in course management</p>
<p><u>Opportunities</u></p> <p>Growing population close to the course          Difficulties being experienced by some local courses</p>	<p><u>Threats</u></p> <p>Increasing competition from 18 hole courses in the area, many offering special deals          Increasing costs of maintaining a high quality course</p>

As a facility for training green keepers, the course should be in very good condition at all times. Unfortunately this has not always been the case. There are specific reasons why Richard has not always found it easy to attain the standards necessary. Workload, particularly instructing students, puts pressure on time. Requirements of the curriculum mean that it is not nearly so easy to use students to do the immediate jobs necessary whilst at the same time as developing their skills to achieve their qualifications.

The following are some of the specific issues that have risen over the last few months;

Lack of sand in bunkers - considerable criticism about lack of sand in bunkers, particularly the front bunker by the 8<sup>th</sup> green. A considerable amount of sand was purchased in the autumn but clearly the improvement was short-lived! A large load of sand has been put in the bunkers recently.

Quality of the winter greens - the real Achilles heel! The bigger cups help but the greens are still very poor. The worst is the first, largely due to wet soil. Our plans to improve the drainage on the first fairway are mentioned in the next section. Richard plans to carry out an extensive programme on the winter greens throughout the summer, including over-seeding and closer cutting. We should enjoy the benefits next winter.

Lack of definition of fairways during winter - this has been a feature of Reaseheath for some time. It has been worse this winter, somewhat ironically as a result of the better condition of the rough and semi-rough last summer. These areas were cut more frequently right into the autumn, helping golfers find their ball more easily! However, next winter the semi-rough will be left longer in autumn, leaving a clearer definition of the edge of the fairway.

Drainage and wetter conditions - Reaseheath golf course benefits from being on light soil that for the most part is naturally free draining. The course is rarely closed, even when most of the courses in the area are shut. However, the course generally seems to have been wetter this last winter, despite having had relatively little rain. Usage by golfers over the years and work on the course may have created a 'pan', a layer impeding drainage, deeper down that has not been remedied by slitting and verti-draining. The cold frosty weather hasn't helped. Perhaps parking at Open Day is another factor. Richard is going to hire an 'Earthquake'! This is a piece of equipment that disturbs the soil at depth and hopefully will improve the drainage significantly. This will be much cheaper than an expensive drainage scheme with pipes, gravel fill etc. The fairways will also be 'jumbo-cored' to increase surface water movement.

Quality of the 6<sup>th</sup> green - the 6<sup>th</sup> green was rebuilt to reduce the risk of players being hit, either from the 4<sup>th</sup> tee when playing the 6<sup>th</sup> or from the 6<sup>th</sup> tee when playing the 4<sup>th</sup> hole. Such a major project is necessarily protracted at Reaseheath by the necessity to build the work into teaching timetables. Adverse weather conditions compounded the problem and the substructure has suffered as a result. Richard will put considerable effort in to bring this green up to the required standard.

## Reaseheath Golf Course—contd

Developments in progress are the 2nd & 11th tees. Besides the much improved structure of the tees, safety will be improved. The 11th tee will be significantly longer! The 10th tee will also be enlarged in the near future, that should improve the quality of the turf. The 9th tee is due for redevelopment next winter.

Richard is acutely aware of the need to keep the golfers happy. To that end we have established a 'course advisory committee' and regular meetings will be arranged throughout the year. Look out for 'minutes' of these meetings on the secretary's notice board. There will also be a list of members of this group and dates of the meetings so you will know whom to 'badger'! Richard will also post regular reports on the notice board showing work done and the proposed work schedules for the next week or so.

Environmental award - Reaseheath has recently won an award from English Nature for the environmental work that is being carried out on the golf course. Very few Cheshire courses have received this award.

### Course Marshals

Currently there are 3 course marshals, namely Bob Ellis, Adrian Baldini and Denis Murphy. They have volunteered to help the golf club and College be trying to reduce the number of people playing without paying. However, they will also try to ensure that all players respect golf etiquette by repairing pitchmarks, replacing divots, raking bunkers, and don't hold up other players unnecessarily. Players should also respect the safety signs. Although the marshals have high visibility jackets and armbands, they may not always be wearing them. However, all players should take notice of them, whether or not they have their 'badges of office' on. They are acting on our

### Matches

There is a full programme of both friendly and league matches. Please support your Captains by putting your name on the lists in the clubhouse. There is nothing like competitive golf for improving your game, and we all want to get better, don't we?

Brian Cherrington in the Captain of the North Staffs League team, Brian Gough captains the men and mixed matches. Mary Moran will lead the ladies.

**Captain's Charity** - Brian Gough's charity is MacMillan Cancer Relief, the same as last year's charity. Please do all you can to support Brian for this excellent cause.

### Email and website

Quite a few of the members have email addresses registered on the club database. As yet, newsletters and other communications are sent out by post (snail mail!!) As more members add their email addresses to the list, we will be able to communicate electronically to a greater extent, thus speeding things up and saving money for the club. Please email secretary Chris Bishop ([chrisb@reaseheath.ac.uk](mailto:chrisb@reaseheath.ac.uk)) to get your email added. Don't worry if you are not on email, you won't miss out!

### Sad news

It is with great sadness that we heard of the sudden death of Adelaide Mortram, wife of Dennis. Dennis founded both the course and Reaseheath Golf Club and is our only life member. Since his retirement from his job as lecturer at Reaseheath in 1997 he has been seen only rarely on the golf course. He was very close to Adelaide and recently spent much of his time in recent years away with her, travelling many parts of the world. Our thoughts are with Dennis and his children, Adrian and Joanne.

